Training the Trainer

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In recent years, the Army has devoted a great amount of time, effort, and resources to training its soldiers in how to fight. Our literature, training devices, and training centers all reflect this focus. In spite of some dramatic training improvements, however, we are still missing the mark. Our training efforts at the institution and unit levels will never be as good as they could be unless we concentrate our future efforts on training the trainer.

Training the trainer is an inherent function of leadership. All leaders must also be trainers. As stated in Field Manual 25-100, "Training is not merely the rightful concern of leaders, it's their obligation." Today, our institutions are not producing leaders who are competent trainers—leaders who know how to train others or how to develop training competencies in their subordinates. To achieve the full potential of our recent training initiatives, therefore, we must strive for a better balance in our efforts to train our leaders not only how to fight but also how to train.

In the past, we have assumed that if an individual soldier, leader, or trainer could perform a particular task to standard, he could train someone else to perform that same task to standard. In fact, however, we have never spent much time training our leaders in the specific tasks or techniques associated with being good trainers or coaches.

The technique for developing a trainer that most of us have observed during our Army careers might be described as more of an apprenticeship approach in which there is no structured or standardized process. An apprentice learns by watching others. After a period of time he becomes a craftsman and, with the accumulation of additional advanced skills, may eventually become a master craftsman. There are few if any stated criteria for being labeled a craftsman other than a master craftsman's stamp of approval.

Much the same is true in the method the Army uses to develop an NCO trainer. After observing his mentor for a time, he is thrown into the training breach and is expected to perform at the same level of proficiency as the more experienced NCO. Generally speaking, there is no testing or certification to indicate whether or not the trainer has been prepared satisfactorily for his training mission.

Obviously, there are some flaws in our present system of developing trainers, whether it takes place in an institution or a unit:

- There are few criteria for standards in which a novice trainer must demonstrate his proficiency before he becomes an instructor or a trainer.
- There is no scientific methodology for determining what a trainer should be required to do.
- There are no identified trainer tasks, conditions, or standards.

SYSTEMS APPROACH

In brief, we have not applied the systems approach to training to the tasks a trainer has to perform. Essentially, we have said—either consciously or unconsciously—that if a trainer can perform a task to standard, he is capable of training soldiers to perform that task. In fact, in some cases we seem to put a high premium on a trainer's ability to perform a task to an extremely high level of proficiency and assume that because he is an expert practitioner of a skill he can train others to be experts in the same skill.

The fallacy of this approach is obvious in the following football analogy. Some say Joe Namath was the best pure passing quarterback football has ever seen. If it is true that great practitioners also make great coaches, then Joe Namath should also make a great quarterback coach. But most who have observed Namath over the years doubt that he has that ability.

Obviously, the corollary to this analogy is that there have been some effective quarterback coaches who were not necessarily great practitioners of the art as players. A great coach has to use a different approach from that of a great practitioner.

What the Army must do is to identify tasks that trainers have to be able to perform and then train them in those tasks; certify that they are capable of performing those tasks to standard; and ensure that they are also proficient in performing the same tasks they expect those they are training to perform.

As a point of clarification, it should be clearly understood that it is important for a trainer to be able to perform a soldier's task to high standards. Given a choice, however, as to where the most effort should be expended in developing skills, the choice should be trainer competencies rather than soldier skills.

For example, if effective individual training is an important goal, the Army must develop trainer tasks, conditions, and standards and then train its trainers to those standards. This concept is based on the notion that the tasks a trainer has to perform are different and distinct from the tasks the soldiers they train are required to perform. Thus, a soldier during the initial stages of basic rifle marksmanship training is taught to apply the four fundamentals of marksmanship—aiming, breathing, trigger squeeze, and body position. The soldier's trainer should be expected to apply each of those fundamentals to the required standard, although being able to do those tasks correctly does not in itself make him a good trainer.

COROLLARY TASK

Accordingly, a corollary trainer task might read: Train soldiers to apply the four fundamentals of rifle marksmanship. This should be taken to mean that to train a soldier in that task, the trainer must be able to instruct the four fundamentals of rifle marksmanship; identify soldiers who are having difficulty or problems in applying the fundamentals; analyze their problems and determine what is causing them to fail to achieve the standard; and, after he has diagnosed those problems, correct the soldiers so that they can reach the standard. The essence of a trainer task, therefore, is to be able to instruct, identify, analyze, and correct. (An example of a trainer task, condition, and standard for applying the marksmanship fundamentals is shown in Figure 1.)

Frequently, trainers also must use training devices and must therefore be trained and certified in using them. A trainer who is training soldiers in using the Dragon medium antiarmor weapon system, for instance, must be proficient in the use of the Dragon launch effects simulator (LES) and launch effects trainer (LET). He must know how to set up both devices and put them into operation, how to use the entire system to evaluate student performance, and how to maintain the system. He must also know how to set up such ancillary devices as the tracking board and instruct those who are going to assist him in using the system. Furthermore, he must know all of the safety aspects associated with using a training device. Consequently, one of the trainer tasks associated with the LET would read: Prepare the monitoring set for operation with the launch effects trainer. (An example of the specific condition and standards associated with this trainer task is at Figure 2.)

The proposition that training trainers in trainer tasks will result in better trainers raises the question, In what tasks do trainers need to be trained? Clearly, an argument could

BASIC RIFLE MARKSMANSHIP TRAINER TASK

TASK	Train soldiers in the application of the four fundamentals of BRM.
CONDITION	Given a suitable training area with the target-box exercise equipment and devices, individual fighting position, equipment for dime-washer exercise, the Riddle device, training support package (TSP) and all associated training aids, and four instructors (role playing as students/trainees) each with M16 rifle, helmet, and LCE.
STANDARD	The candidate instructor will: 1. Present the safety briefing in accordance with the TSP. 2. Present the introductory instruction on the four fundamentals of basic rifle marksmanship using an assistant instructor, all training aids required in the TSP and in accordance with instructor training course standards and the TSP. 3. Identify, analyze, and correct the body position of each student/trainee in the prone unsupported and foxhole supported positions. (NOTE: One soldier will be in the correct position; the certifying instructor will have the other three trainees use common body position errors.) 4. Identify, analyze, and correct students who fail to apply the four fundamentals of BRM during the target-box exercise. 5. Identify, analyze, and correct all students for breathing, trigger squeeze, and body position errors during the dime-washer exercise. 6. Identify, analyze, and correct peer coaches during all exercises. 7. Correctly mount and use the Riddle device to analyze and correct a soldier with an aiming point problem.

Figure 1

be made that would require the development of trainer tasks as corollaries to all individual tasks, both common and MOS-specific. Too, depending on the number and the complexity of the enabling skills associated with each critical combat task, it could be argued that some if not all enabling skills also require the development of corollary trainer tasks.

Perhaps the simplest test to use in determining the importance of a trainer task is to apply the DIF (Difficulty-Importance-Frequency) model to each Soldier's Manual task and the corollary trainer tasks. This model asks the following fundamental questions:

How difficult is it to perform the task? Applied to trainers, this question could be modified: "How difficult is it to *train* the task?" The measure normally associated with this criterion is the complexity of the task. If it involves a sizable number of performance measures, or if a specific sequence is required in performing it to standard, the task has a high degree of difficulty. Accordingly, task difficulty is generally proportional to the number of performance measures and a required sequence of performance. Thus, the difficulty of training soldiers in the common task of "React to indirect fire," which has only two performance measures, is inherently less difficult than the trainer tasks that call for conducting a Dragon training exercise that has 11 distinct performance measures, each of which must be performed in a proper sequence.

Some tasks are inherently difficult to learn even when they have few associated performance measures. Consider, for example, the task "Estimate range." While there is only one standard and one performance measure for this task, it is a difficult skill to master and train, as evidenced by the high frequency of student failure associated with it. Therefore, difficulty can also be measured by a student's ability to learn the task, regardless of its complexity.

Difficulty in task performance is also an indicator of potential learning decay for the student and the trainer. Simply put, the more difficult the task, the more frequently it must be trained and evaluated to sustain proficiency.

How important is the task in the context of a soldier's mission, job, or survivability? One might expect that if a task is important for a soldier to learn, then it is equally important for a trainer to learn to train that task. Not all tasks are equal in importance, however, even though they appear in Soldier's Manuals and by definition are all critical to a soldier's combat performance. Training a soldier to determine direction using field expedient methods, for instance, is probably not as important as training that same soldier to engage enemy personnel with his assigned weapon. A soldier's ability to accomplish his job, the unit's mission, and his individual survival must dictate the importance of the task.

The final arbiters in selecting individual tasks for training are the senior NCOs in a unit. If a soldier's task is important, then it is axiomatic that training trainers to train that task is also important.

For the trainer, the importance of a task may also be a function of the way a critical combat task is to be trained. For example, since few Dragon gunners get an opportunity to fire a live missile, the use of the LES and LET devices takes on special meaning—using these devices is not only important to effective Dragon training, it is essential.

How frequently is the task expected to be performed in combat? This is also a measure of the task's complexity. A task that calls for giving first aid for frostbite, at best, has only seasonal relevance. It cannot be considered as critical to a soldier as engaging enemy personnel with his individual weapon. Developing trainer tasks for tasks that may be difficult to perform is important, but tasks that are performed infrequently should take a low priority when

DRAGON TRAINER TASK

TASK	Prepare the monitoring set for operation with the launch effects trainer (LET).
CONDITION	On a suitable range or training site, given one or more monitoring sets and LET devices, LET support stands, and TM 9-6920-484-12.
STANDARD	1. Perform a before-operation check on monitoring set. 2. Position monitoring set at firing site. 3. Open monitoring set. 4. Prepare monitoring set for voltage test. 5. Conduct voltage test and replace faulty sets. 6. Connect the W2 cable assembly to the monitoring set and LET.

Figure 2

compared to those that are performed daily. Similarly, if a critical combat task is complex and requires frequent training, then the trainer task, by necessity, will be performed more frequently.

The development of trainer tasks should therefore be predicated on an analysis of the corollary Soldier's Manual tasks using the DIF model, which relates task criticality to combat and training performance and should be the primary measure for developing trainer tasks. Since training devices are not included in Soldier's Manuals, all of the tasks associated with their preparation, use, and maintenance must also be developed into trainer tasks.

In many cases, though, it is simply not enough to develop a trainer task for its corollary Soldier's Manual task or for using a training device. Some Soldier's Manual tasks require a soldier to learn numerous enabling skills before he can perform the task to standard.

Training soldiers to engage enemy personnel with the M16 rifle is an excellent example of a task that requires preliminary training in enabling skills to specific standards. Thus a soldier must apply the fundamentals of rifle marksmanship, demonstrate the integrated act of shooting, group his shots, acquire targets, estimate range, establish a battlesight zero, engage single and multiple targets, perform immediate action, and others. Each of these enabling skills is a unique task that also requires corollary trainer tasks. Therefore, the critical combat or Soldier's Manual task can be viewed as being a terminal learning objective, while the subordinate tasks or skills that must also be trained are enabling learning objectives.

TRAINER TASKS

Once trainer tasks have been developed—whether as terminal or enabling learning objectives—a basis is established for certifying trainers to specific performance standards. Skills that are essential to learning other skills obviously should be trained first. A trainer certification program that includes specific trainer tasks, conditions, and standards will significantly improve the quality of training and the quality of the Army's training.

But "trainer certification" involves more than performing trainer tasks to standard. It is a term that has been bandied about with little definition in the community of the Training and Doctrine Command for a number of years. Within the context of this article, however, certification is defined as "the act or process used to ensure that a trainer/instructor has fulfilled specified requirements to enable him to act as a subject matter expert or instructor in a designated doctrinal or instructional area." Essentially, certification means that a trainer has demonstrated enough proficiency in his designated subject area to be qualified to train in that area. (A sample process for instructor certification is shown in Figure 3.)

When an instructor-candidate is first assigned to a training organization at an institution, he should be screened to

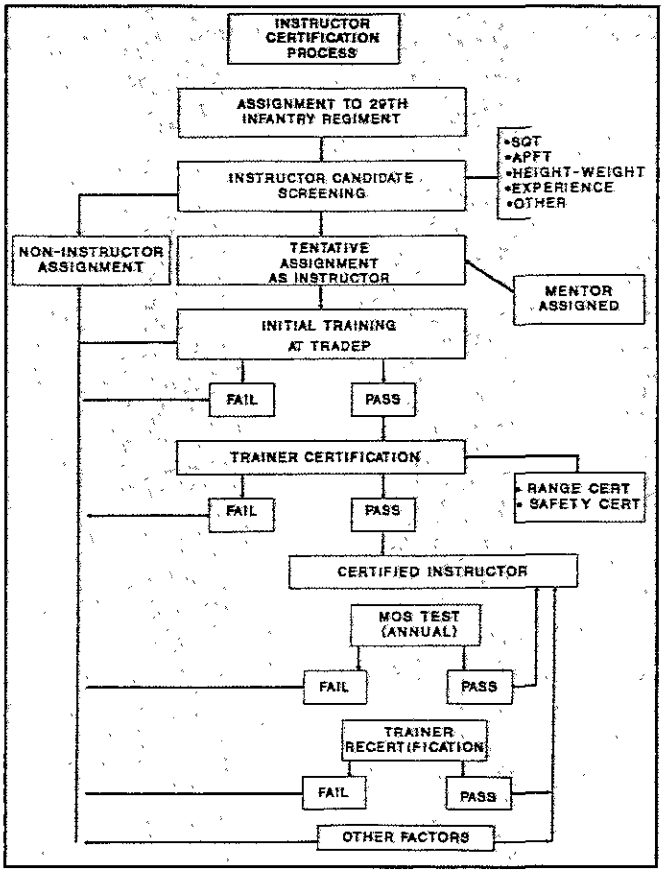

Figure 3

determine whether or not his skill qualification test (SQT) performance, Army Physical Fitness Test results, weight standards, experience, or other factors meet the criteria established for an instructor in the particular area for which he is being considered.

A score of at least 80 on his SQT, the Army qualification standard for promotion to the next higher rank, is desirable for an instructor-candidate. Although it may be necessary in some cases to assign soldiers who have not attained this standard to instructional duties, it should still be a stated objective. If an instructor has not reached the standard at his next testing, however, his removal from instructor status should be considered. (The new NCO self-development tests may call for a modification to this standard.)

If an instructor-candidate meets the appropriate requirements, he should be tentatively assigned as an instructor and sent initially to an instructor training course (ITC) to prepare him in the methods of instruction he will need to become a qualified instructor. Simultaneously, he should be assigned a mentor from his instructional branch. The mentor must be a seasoned, experienced trainer who is capable of providing advice and counsel and of overwatching the individual's preparation for his instructional duties.

If the trainer-candidate fails this course, he should either be enrolled for a second attempt or assigned to non-instructor duties. If he passes the ITC, he should begin trainer certification, which may include up to three components:

safety certification, range operation certification, and trainer proficiency certification.

Safety qualification, which may include both written and hands-on sub-components, should be administered by the designated unit assistant safety officer. If the trainer is to instruct on a range, he must pass a range division training program and be certified as a range instructor. Finally, he must pass his trainer proficiency certification within his own committee or instructional branch.

Trainer proficiency certification itself has three sub-components: a written component to test the trainer's knowledge in his particular subject area; a student component to test the instructor-candidate's ability to perform the tasks he will be called on to teach soldiers; and finally, a trainer component to test his ability to perform trainer tasks to the stated standards.

It is essential that all trainers undergo periodic recertification to ensure that they continue to be proficient in their subject area. Annual skill qualification test (SQT) or self-development test (SDT) scores should be used to determine their competency to continue as instructors.

If this concept of trainer tasks is adopted, then we must determine how we can provide information concerning training tasks, conditions, and standards in our training literature. There appear to be three possible alternatives:

Our Soldier's Manuals could be expanded to incorporate the trainer tasks that are corollaries to the combat critical tasks already in the manual at each skill level. Unfortunately, since those manuals include only the critical combat tasks, they could incorporate only the corollary critical trainer tasks. In addition, most Soldier's Manuals are already voluminous and including these trainer tasks would only magnify that problem.

It is also apparent that trainers would have to be trained in the tasks, conditions, and standards that have been established for many of the enabling learning objectives that are sub-components of the critical trainer tasks. Consequently, the Soldier's Manuals are probably not appropriate for documenting trainer tasks, conditions, and standards.

Separate trainer's manuals distinct from their Soldier's

Manual counterparts could be developed, but this would further increase the amount of doctrinal literature that already burdens the field.

Finally, trainer tasks, conditions, and standards could be incorporated and added to existing training circulars, field manuals, and technical manuals that relate to specific items of equipment and weapon systems. The trainer tasks, conditions, and standards for the M16A1 and A2 rifles, for instance, could be added to Field Manual 23-9.

Of the three options, the last seems to have the most merit. Since we tend to concentrate our individual training on specific items of equipment or weapons, adding the trainer tasks, conditions, and standards related to a piece of equipment or weapon to these manuals may be the most expedient and effective approach to documenting trainer tasks in our literature.

Perhaps the most important issue to be resolved is the question of where to train trainer tasks, conditions, and standards and where to certify trainers. Clearly, institutional organizations must establish their own trainer certification programs before allowing trainers to train.

The issue of the certification of trainers in a unit is more complex and more difficult to solve. These trainers have a multitude of training requirements that inhibit their specialization in any particular area. It is probably unrealistic to expect that specific train-the-trainer programs can be established and executed to standard in a unit. Ideally, trainers should arrive in a unit already certified to train on the tasks associated with their MOSs and skill levels.

For noncommissioned officers, the Noncommissioned Officer Education System (NCOES) must be the vehicle for certification. Graduates of the Primary Leadership Development Course (PLDC), for example, should be certified to train Skill Level 1 common tasks; graduates of the Basic NCO Course (BNCOC) must be certified to train soldiers in the specific Skill Level 1 and 2 tasks associated with their MOSs; and graduates of the Advanced NCO Course (ANCOC) must be certified to train Skill Level 3 tasks in their MOSs.

While some effort has been made to ensure that courses within the NCOES focus on how to train, none has provided enough time within its existing program of instruction to add extensive train-the-trainer certification requirements such as those outlined in this article. In fact, the full implementation of this concept may be unrealistic and unattainable. Consequently, it might be necessary to list in an order of importance the critical trainer tasks that demand certification at a training institution before a leader-trainer returns to a unit. Using this approach, some trainer tasks will be certified in the institution while others, usually of lesser importance, will be certified in the unit.

Further, the tasks that are certified at the institution will also require some degree of recertification at the unit. In any event, the current NCOES focus on how to fight must now be balanced with an increased emphasis and focus on how to *train* to fight.

If we must revise our approach to NCOES in regard to training NCO trainers, we must also review our approach to training officers. The initial effort of an officer train-the-trainer program must be made by the officer accession programs—Officer Candidate School (OCS), the Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC), and the United States Military Academy (USMA). But the predominant emphasis in certifying officer trainers will be in the branch officer basic courses. The trainer tasks selected for the institutional certification of officers in their respective branch courses should be the same tasks selected for certification in the basic and advanced noncommissioned officer courses.

Training the trainer in both officer and NCO development courses will require a total rethinking of the way we have done business in the past. Both will require more hours for the training of critical trainer tasks. We must take a hard look at those areas in our current courses where other instruction can be modified or eliminated. If we expect to improve the quality of our training and of the performance of our soldiers at the training institutions, and the Army at large, we must set priorities and re-allocate time for training our trainers.

Training the trainer using trainer tasks, conditions, and standards is a logical follow-on to the identification of critical combat tasks and represents a corollary approach. Both are important. Both require a separate analytical approach, and both require a concerted effort and expenditure of resources to achieve quality and excellence in training.

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